

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 510

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, UNSC, LE, IS
SUBJ: UNTSO COMPLAINT TO IDF REGARDING CHRISTIAN FORCES
ACTIVITY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON

1. WE UNDERSTAND FROM UN SOURCE THAT UNTSO OFFICER FEB 22
COMPLAINED TO IDF LIAISON OFFICER LEVINSON REGARDING CHRISTIAN
FORCES ACTIVITY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AGAINST UN PEACEKEEPING
OPERATIONS. IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF COMPLAINT WAS HIJACKING FEB 21
OF THREE UN VEHICLES BY CHRISTIAN FORCES AS WELL AS EVIDENCE
THAT INCIDENT AT OPMAR FEB 20 REPORTED JERUSALEM 479 WAS ALSO
CAUSED BY CHRISTIAN FORCES. IN RESPONSE, LEVINSON TOLD UNTSO
OFFICER THAT IT WAS NOT ISRAELI POLICY TO INTERFERE WITH UN
PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AND THAT IDF
WOULD AGAIN ATTEMPT TO CONTROL LEBANESE CHRISTIANS AND PREVENT
FURTHER PROBLEMS. LEVINSON SUGGESTED THAT UN SHOULD GO PUBLIC
WITH ITS COMPLAINTS ABOUT LOSSES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

2. UN SOURCE TELLS US THAT CONTINUATION OF RECENT AVERAGE
WEEKLY LOSS OF THREE UN VEHICLES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, AS
WELL AS FURTHER LOSSES OF RADIOS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT COULD
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PAGE 02 JERUSA 00510 231559Z

RESULT IN CUT-BACK IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN SOUTHERN
LEBANON BY APRIL. UNNY HAS BEEN ALERTED TO THIS EFFECT. UNMO'S
OPERATIONS ARE ALREADY LIMITED AS THEY ARE PERFORMING NO
PATROLLING OUTSIDE OP'S AND ONLY MOVEMENT OCCURS TWICE WEEKLY
(TUESDAY AND FRIDAY) WHEN UNMO'S ARE RELIEVED.

3. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, BOTH SIILASVUO AND ERSKINE SUSPECT

IDF MAY BE ENCOURAGING LEBANESE CHRISTIANS TO HARASS UN OPERATIONS WITH AIM OF EVENTUALLY REMOVING UN PRESENCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AND THUS GIVING IDF FREER HAND FOR ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON. ISRAELI RADIO MORNING NEWS FEB 23 REPORTED THAT SIILASVUO HAD DENIED RECENT SWEDISH PRESS REPORT THAT PLO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIJACKING OF UN VEHICLES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. UNTSO IS REPORTEDLY PREPARING PRESS RELEASE ON SUBJECT WHICH PRESUMABLY COULD DESCRIBE RECENT LOSSES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AS WE HAVE REPORTED IN JERUSALEM 334.

4. COMMENT: UNMO'S ARE IMPRESSED BY DEPENDENCE OF CHRISTIAN FORCES IN SOTHERN LEBANON ON ISRAELI SUPPORT AND BY VIRTUAL ALLIANCE BETWEEN IDF AND CHRISTIANS LIKE MAJOR HADDAD AND MAJOR CHEDIAK. CONSEQUENTLY, UNTSO BELIEVES THAT ISRAELIS COULD MAKE CHRISTIANS CEASE HARASSMENT OF UN OPERATIONS IF IDF REALLY CRACKED DOWN. UN STATISTICS SHOW THAT ALTHOUGH LEFTISTS HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MAJORITY OF UN VEHICLE THEFTS UNTIL LATE FALL OF 1977, SINCE THAT TIME IT HAS BEEN CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE BEEN CHIEF CULPRITS.

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